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To the Graduate Program:

This project, titled "Visual Bookmarking: A Supportive Tool for Newcomers in their Development of the English Language" and written by Elsy Lucia Manrique Baena, is presented to the Graduate Program of Greensboro College. I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

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Paula Wilder, Advisor

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VISUAL BOOKMARKING: A SUPPORTIVE TOOL FOR NEWCOMERS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Presented to
the Graduate Program
of
Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
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Advisor: Prof. Paula Wilder

Abstract

Teaching in the United States has become more challenging due to the wide diversity found in many classrooms, the increasing numbers of newcomers that vary each year, and the world's dynamics changing rapidly every day. Teachers are expected to be prepared to adapt to the new tendencies, and our students must be prepared to face all the technology, social, cultural, and cognitive challenges that the world has for them. This paper presents a visual bookmarking tool as a strategy to support teachers and newcomers to overcome these challenges in their development of the English language at the elementary level.

Dedication

I would like to thank my family and God for always loving and supporting me, and especially to my parents who always taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve. To my friends and mentors who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this thesis. And last, to my beloved husband, Robbie, who has been my rock, and my constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school. I am truly thankful for having you in my life.

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Chapter I: Introduction

As the world's dynamics change rapidly every day, teaching in a 21st-Century classroom has become more challenging. Teachers are expected to be prepared to adapt to the new tendencies, and our students must be prepared integrally to face all the technology, social, cultural, and cognitive challenges that the world has for them. Moreover, being a teacher in the United States can be more challenging due to the wide diversity found in the classroom and the increasing numbers of immigrants that vary each year. According to the 2014 American Community Survey, 1.3 million foreign-born individuals moved to the United States from different countries, such as India, China, and Mexico (as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Furthermore, Zong and Batalova (2016) pointed out that approximately 50 percent of the total population of the immigrant in 2014 were not English proficient; indeed, different languages such as Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Filipino, Vietnamese, among others, can be found in the United States classrooms.

Consequently, teachers are expected to successfully support the newcomer in the adaptation of this new system as well as cover all the academic gaps that the student may have. Likewise, teachers must reflect on the appropriate strategies that are necessary to be included to promote academic achievement and to support the specials needs and challenges that a culturally diverse classroom can face.

Herrera and Murry (2011) have defined all the different needs that students have when they arrive in the mainstream classroom, and although teachers assume that the language barrier is one of the most important factors to consider, there are more aspects to take into account if teachers want to support students to succeed at school. According to the findings of Thomas and

Collier (1997), there are four dimensions that teachers must address in their classroom: linguistic, academic, cognitive, and sociocultural (as cited in Herrera & Murry, 2011).

As a TESOL student, and based on these experiences, I want to support educators and I have designed a tool that helps them empower their instruction and gives them more instruments to better support newcomers in their academic process. For that reason, I have organized online resources using an application called Symbaloo in which teachers will easily find the best online resources that the students can independently use to develop their language and communication skills as soon as they are integrated into a mainstream classroom.

Learning the basic language vocabulary is extremely important for newcomers, not only to communicate their needs with the teachers, but also to participate in daily social activities. This kind of language used in the daily activities is defined as BICS, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skill, and according to Echevarria and Graves (2010) "involves such abilities as retelling events, describing experiences, narrating activities, offering personal opinions, all within the general give-and-take of conversation with family and friends" (p. 11). The learning of BICS is easier for children than for adults and can take from six months to three years to develop (Echevarria & Graves, 2010). Echevarria and Graves (2010) described the difference between language skills used for social or academic purposes. While students use BICS in a social context and during daily life routines, the language classroom skills or CALP, cognitive academic language proficiency, is used for academic purposes and is more cognitively challenging (Echevarria & Graves, 2010).

In this perspective, newcomers will need support to develop BICS skills, and if they have a website of resources, such as Symbaloo, they can acquire the basic vocabulary in the second language to be able to participate in social and daily routine activities. The Symbaloo I

developed has different resources that, not only will help students to learn and practice the basic English vocabulary (colors, numbers, alphabet sounds), but also has resources to support what is being taught in class.

In this context, while teachers are using new interactive tools like Symbaloo to support their students in second language acquisition, they are also preparing them for all technological challenges and changes in the 21st century. According to Peregoy and Boyle (2013), "now, more than ever, the education we provide our youth must meet the needs of a future defined by constant innovation and change" (p. 5). Our world is in continuous change, and especially technology has changed different aspects of our lives, the way we live, communicate, socialize, among others. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) explained how teachers are using digital technologies like PowerPoint or iMovie to enrich their classes and support English learners. These examples show us how technology has changed even the way the students learn, and that is why the teachers must be prepared to use the latest technologies to help students to be competent and successful in the 21st century.

The use of applications like Symbaloo will help the teachers to have an innumerable web of resources to support the newcomers; furthermore, the students will be more interested and engaged in using technology while they develop their language skills. Moreover, Symbaloo is a tool that many teachers are already using at Stoneville Elementary, so the ESL Symbaloo can be easily added to the website of resources used by the teachers.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In order to better support newcomers in their adaptation of the new system and to help them in the process of being successful academically in a mainstream classroom, teachers must be aware of the diverse backgrounds and the different needs that must be addressed with an English learner, not only cognitively, but also culturally and emotionally. In this chapter, I review the diverse literature that supports the reason for this project. First, I examine literature to better understand the newcomers and the challenges that they face in their academic process. Then, I provide an overview of the research related to the process of second language acquisition of newcomers at the elementary level. Finally, I review scholarship on the use of technology to support ESL learners.

Understanding Newcomers

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) defined the term newcomers as "any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (p.1). Most of these students speak English as a non-native language, and over the years the numbers of newcomers have increased progressively. According to Peregoy and Boyle (2013), "between 1999 and 2009, U.S federal education statistics indicated that English learners' enrollment increased at almost seven times the rate of total student enrollment" (p.6). Consequently, the United States is considered a nation of immigrants, and newcomers play an important role in society. When newcomers begin attending U.S. schools, teachers, administrators, and specialists have the responsibility to support these students as they integrate into the mainstream classrooms and succeed academically and socially. As Igoa (1995) has argued, newcomers experience

emotional and cognitive changes when they leave their countries and feel forced to start a new life in a different place. It is, therefore, important that teachers do not ignore the background of the students and the social context where they were immersed (Igoa, 1995). Peregoy and Boyle (2013) also suggested that teachers must be aware of the personal background of each of the students. In this way, teachers can better understand the students' needs, their feelings and their fears to better design meaningful instruction that supports academic achievement.

According to Igoa (1995), one of the emotional traumas that newcomers experience when they are exposed to a unfamiliar foreign land is culture shock. Oberg (1960) defined that culture shock is "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar sings and symbols of social intercourse" (p.142). Oberg (1960) suggested that people depend on cues given by their familiar groups to define who they are and to support their self-concept. Without these cues, people can experience anxiety and frustration. Shapiro, Farrelly, and Tomas (2014) explained that culture shock can be reflected during different students' daily activities, such as trying new food or socializing with others. Also, students experience this culture shock when they try to adjust to the norms of the new school environment; for example, they can be unsure about how to interact with the instructor or others students appropriately, or how to talk in class or ask questions (Shapiro, Farrelly , & Tomas, 2014). As teachers of the newcomers, one of the main responsibilities is to look for pertinent strategies to help the students to know and manage culture shock and, in this way, create an adequate learning environment. One strategy to overcoming culture shock is to give students the tools to adapt to their new life and to help them retain their appreciation of their native culture and family traditions. As Igoa (1995) advised, "to ease culture shock in no way means that one has to assimilate quickly and become what one is not rather one should stay connected to one's own culture and also learn the cues of the new culture" (p. 39).

Peregoy and Boyle (2013) described some of the strategies that teachers should use in their classrooms to bring social and emotional support to the newcomers when they are experiencing the process of adapting to a new culture. The teacher must also consider offering a safe and secure environment, and also, promote a sense of belonging. To create a feeling of safety and security in the classroom, teachers can assign a special friend to the newcomer who will be in charge of sharing the school´s rules, show the different places around the school to the new students, and be sure he/she can adapt to the day's routine (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Likewise, to create a sense of belonging, the teachers should assign a homegroup that brings a sense of caring, respect, and support to the newcomer. This group should remain together for a long time, and the group should provide a social unit to help the newcomer integrate into the classroom dynamics (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Moreover, Peregoy and Boyle (2013) emphasized that "only when new students become comfortably integrated into your classroom´s social and academic routines will optimal second language acquisition and academic learning occur" (p. 19).

Herrera and Murry (2011) also explained some of the different needs that newcomers have when they arrive in the mainstream classroom, and although teachers assume that the language barrier is one of the most important factors to consider, there are more aspects to take into account if the teachers want to support students success at school. In fact, Thomas and Collier (1997 as cited in Ovando & Combs, 2012) proposed the Prism Model to explain the different sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive components that help teachers understand the challenges that English learners may face during their academic process.

Sociocultural processes.

The sociocultural dimension involves all the different social and cultural factors that interfere in the second language acquisition process of the student in different contexts, such as home, school, community, and broader society (Ovando & Combs, 2012). These factors can affect the student in a positive or negative way. When the student is involved in a supportive environment, the language acquisition process may be affected positively. By contrast, factors, such as prejudice and discrimination, can negatively impact the self-esteem and anxiety of the students thereby also impacting their academic achievements in school (Ovando & Combs, 2012).

Similarly, Krashen (1981) developed the affective filter hypothesis, which explains how multiples variables, such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation can impact the second language acquisition process. According to Krashen (1981), a student will be more willing to learn a second language and will have better classroom performance with a low level of anxiety, high motivation, and strong self-confidence. However, if the levels of anxiety are high and other affective factors such as motivation and self-esteem are low, students are more likely to have academic problems (Krashen, 1981). As Herrera and Murry (2011) stated, “once the affective filter is raised, the teacher’s instructional input, no matter how well planned or well delivered, is unlikely to aid language acquisition or improve academic performance in the classroom (p. 17).

Language development.

Language development refers to students’ oral and written skills, such as phonology, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse, and paralinguistic. The

stronger students' native language proficiency skills the more proficient they will be in their second language to ensure academic success (Ovando & Combs, 2012).

Academic development.

The academic dimension refers to all the academic skills in the content areas, including language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Ovando & Combs, 2012). Herrera and Murry (2011) argued that academic language development in the second language is difficult for language learners because academic language involves the understanding of more complex and abstract language. Likewise, Cummins (1981) emphasized that English learners take from five to seven years to acquire the cognitive academic language skills needed for success in school. Therefore, it is very important to promote activities in which the students can develop academic work in their first language first, so this knowledge can be easily transfer from first to second language.

Cognitive development.

Cognitive development is defined as a natural process that occurs from birth to the end of schooling (Ovando & Combs, 2012). Herrera and Murry (2011) discussed the different challenges that students faced within the cognitive dimension that can affect the academic process. Interrupted cognitive development in the first language, cognitive effort understanding the rules system of second language, and decontextualized learning tasks, among others, are some of the cognitive demands that second language learners face in their adaptation to a mainstream classroom (Herrera & Murry, 2011). To overcome those challenges, research has demonstrated that it is important to address all the components of the cognitive dimension in the

student's first language and second language simultaneously to ensure academic success (Ovando & Combs, 2012).

Herrera and Murry (2011) emphasized the importance of teachers considering the four dimensions of the Prims Model together to facilitate the academic success of the English learners since these components are interrelated, and they are essential for the students to reach their fullest potential.

Second Language Acquisition

According to Ovando and Combs (2012), three of the four dimensions of the Prims Model (sociocultural, cognitive and language) have been incorporated in the different theories of second-language acquisition and are considered crucial to this process. Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2017) explained that sometimes teachers do not consider all the previous language knowledge that the students have in their L1, and they only focus on the fact that they are not English proficient. Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2017) argued that English learners learn different skills at home in their L1 that can be useful while learning a second language, especially for academic purposes. Some of the language and literacy skills that teachers should consider when planning programs for English learners are:

- **Oral language skills in the native language:** Aspects of the native language can be easily transferred to the second language.
- **Literacy skills in the native language:** When a student knows how to read and write in the native language, it will be easier to learn those skills in the new language.

- **Out-of-school literacy skills:** Activities like making a shopping list or using social media, can help students understand the role of literacy for different purposes.
- **Language brokering roles:** Many English learners take on roles of interpreter or translator, using English in different contexts because their parents do not know English.
- **Cultural funds of knowledge and life experience:** Teachers must be aware of the language and cultural practices of the students at home, as well as the life experiences they have had. Thus, those can be easily included in the classroom task and curriculum, creating a meaningful space for the English learners to develop language skills while sharing about their culture (Echevarría et al., 2017, p. 8).

In this context, teachers must recognize the language and literacy skills that students already have outside of school to use it as a medium of instruction in the L2. Krashen (1991) argued that the L1 can provide background knowledge, and it helps to make second language instruction more comprehensible. Also, the L1 enhances the development of basic literacy skills; for example, if students know how to read in their L1, this ability can easily be transferred to the L2, or if students understand the composition process in their L1, they will be able to use it in other languages they acquire (Krashen, 1991).

Herrera and Murry (2011) asserted that learning a second language is a complex process and involves different challenges. Sousa (2011) explained that learning a new language after the age of 5 can be more challenging because the networks for the L1 are already established at this age. For this reason, teachers of English learners must have a deep understanding of the mental

demands that students face and be aware of the differences in terms of phonemes, morphemes, syntax, and semantics between L1 and the target language. Likewise, Ovando and Combs (2012) suggested the importance of reviewing the different studies and theories about language acquisition to better understand the complexity of language development, which is defined as a lifelong process. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) similarly claimed that it is important for teachers to understand the basic theory and studies related to language acquisition to better understand the problems that English learners may face while learning a second language. Besides, Murray and Christison (2011) advised teachers to be informed and understand the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition because there are factors that can affect the L2 process that do not interfere in the L1 acquisition process. For example, the age of acquisition is not an issue in L1 while in L2 it can be relevant, or early and late bilingualism can affect the outcomes of L2 language. Even though it is important for teachers to understand the language development, some authors believed that this topic is still an enigma and that finding an answer to the process language acquisition is still far from being over (Lemetyinen, 2012).

Considering that theories of second language acquisition use information about first language acquisition, Peregoy and Boyle (2013) explained second language acquisition theories from the perspective of the first language acquisition theories: behaviorist, innatist, and interactions.

Behaviorist Perspective in Second Language Acquisition: According to this perspective, students learn a second language by imitation, repetition, and reinforcement of grammatical structures. This theory follows the same sequence in first language acquisition; the listening and speaking skills are taught before that the reading and writing skills.

Innatist Perspective in Second Language Acquisition: Dulay and Burt (1974 as cited in Peregoy & Boyle, 2013) argued that "English language learners creatively construct the rules of the second language in manner similar to that observed in first language acquisition" (p.63).

Interactionist Perspective in Second Language Acquisition: For the interactionist view, naturals conversations between a native and non-native speaker are crucial elements for the language acquisition process. For example, English language learners can get ideas about the new language and can get comprehensible input by negotiating meaning with their English partners by asking for repetition or showing confusion (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013, p.66).

Even though these theories have influenced teaching methods in the classroom, according to Peregoy and Boyle (2013) the most important and cited theories in the study on second language acquisition have been Krashen's theories. Krashen developed five hypotheses:

The Acquisition/learning Hypothesis: According to Krashen (1981) the second language can be developed in two different ways, it can be acquired or learned. On the one hand, language acquisition is similar to the way children develop the first language. This process is subconscious, and learners are not aware they are acquiring the language. On the other hand, Language learning is different because is a formal and conscious study of language, and it includes the explicit presentation of rules and from error correction (Krasen, 1981). This hypothesis has been controversial and some authors, for example Schekochihina's, (2016) have stated that approach is contradictory to the past and present norms of language learning research, and Rohani, (2014 as cited in Koondhar, Siming, & Umrani 2018,) believed that Krashen's hypotheses are untestable and thus undeniable because "his separating learning from acquisition is quite an abstract idea" (p. 35).

The natural order hypothesis: This hypothesis states that language learners acquire (not learn) grammatical structures of a language in a predictable order; for this reason, some grammatical structures are learned earlier than others (Krashen & Terrel, 1998). For example, for the English language, grammatical morphemes like -ing, and plural /s/ are acquired first, and others such as the third person singular ending /s/ or the possessive, are acquired later. Krashen and Terrel (1998) also acknowledged that even though the order of acquisition for first language is similar to the order of acquisition for second language, they are not the same.

The monitor hypothesis: The monitor hypothesis states the relationship between acquisition and learning. While the acquisition is responsible for fluency in the second language, learning can be used as an editor and monitor. Krashen (1981) stated that we use conscious learning to make corrections and to change the output of the acquired esystem before we speak or write. For students to use the monitor hypothesis effectively, three conditions are necessary: sufficient time, focus on grammatical form, and explicit knowledge of the rules.

The input hypothesis: Peregoy and Boyle (2013) explained that in the input hypothesis argued by Krashen, the input language must be understandable and should contain structures that are a bit beyond the acquirer's current level of second language development. Krashen (1981) argued that we acquire messages by understanding the messages and not focusing on the form of the input.

The affective filter: The affective filter refers to how multiples variables, such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation can impact the second language acquisition process (Krashen, 1981).

Stages of Second Language Acquisition

The concept of stages of second language acquisition is related to the Natural Order Hypothesis stated by Krashen (1981), and it affirms that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. Hill and Björk (2008) explained that the same way that babies move through stages of acquiring their first language, students who are learning a second language also move through similar stages. These stages are explained as follows:

- **Preproduction stage:** This stage is also called the silent period. Krashen and Terrel (1998) explained that it is very common that children acquiring a second language may say very little. It is a period in which learners build up competence by active listening and understanding, and the speaking ability emerges after enough competence has been developed.
- **Early production:** According to Hill and Björk (2008), language learners start using single words or two-word phrases, and they are able to participate using keywords and familiar phrases. Robertson and Ford (2009) affirmed that in this stage, the emphasis is still on listening and absorbing the new language.
- **Speech Emergent:** In this stage, according to Hill and Björk (2008), the student is able to produce simple sentences and has a better comprehension of the second language. Robertson and Ford (2009) also commented that the English learners have acquired more vocabulary and errors begin to decrease, especially in common or repeated interactions.
- **Beginning Fluency:** Robertson and Ford (2009) mentioned that in this stage, speech can be fluent in a familiar social situation, but the speech in a new context or in an academic context, can be more challenging.

- **Intermediate Fluency:** In this stage, students can use sentences of increasing length and complexity. Also, students have excellent comprehension and make few grammatical errors (Hill & Björk, 2008).
- **Advanced Fluency:** At this stage, the individual is essentially fluent in all context and comfortable communicating in the second language (Robertson &Ford, 2009)

In this context, it is very important that teachers identify in which stage the English learner is to effectively create a differentiated instruction (Hill & Björk, 2008). Likewise, Robertson and Ford (2009) emphasized the importance of identifying the different stages of the language acquisition process, so teachers can better understand the process that language learners go through to develop skills in a foreign language.

Use of Technology in Education

Teaching in this 21st century implies that educators learn and overcome all the changes and new challenges that technology brings to our classroom to use them in an effective way to support students' academic achievement. "Technological advances are changing the way we live and learn, from interactive internet to social networking sites to smartphones with built-in cameras and beyond" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013, p.4). As Peregoy and Boyle (2013) asserted, technology is changing the way we live and interact with others, and hence, this affects the teaching practices and the way the students learn. Likewise, Cornell (1999) emphasized that it is a reality that teachers, no matter where they are, do not have other alternatives than to adjust to the new tendencies that daily technology is offering.

Technology can be used to transform the relationship between teachers and students, also can be used to adapt learning experiences to support and integrate all the students according to

their needs. Therefore, technology can help teachers to reorganize their instruction, using new ways to renovate teaching practices in a more engaging way (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Kussmaul, Dunn, Bagley, and Watnik (1996) similarly mentioned the different reasons why teachers should consider the use of technology; for example, teachers can vary the presentation of material or let the students customize it; technology tools can improve communication between teachers and students, and students can have easy access to different information. Additionally, Schank and Berman (2004) affirmed that technology has changed and reinvented the meaning of education. Schank and Berman (2004) argued that the conception of education in the 21st century must lead students to become contributing members of society; students able to do many things like "relate well to others, think hard about new and complex issues, communicate well in a variety of media, interact with and utilize tools that are available to the society, make decisions based on scientific and technical knowledge, and so on" (p. 12).

Use of Technology in Second Language Education

Considering that teachers are always looking for ways to improve the teaching practices, researchers also have been analyzing the advantages of using technology to promote students' success in second language education. For example, Traore and Kyei-Blankson (2011) argued that sometimes instructors are using literary texts and language books that can be structurally complex and hard to understand for the ESL learner. For this reason, instructors must look for strategies to adapt the literary materials to meet the need of the students and to make them more relevant, useful, and understandable. Traore and Kyei-Blankson (2011) conducted a study to explore how technology can be used to improve the teaching of literacy in an ESL class. Results of this study showed that technology, such as videos and movies, and other literary materials,

should be used to support literacy in a ESL classroom and to create an engaging environment for the students to become stronger in their reading skills. Likewise, Wang (2005) explored different studies to analyze the advantages of technology integration in the ESL field. Al-Jarf (2004 as cited in Wang, 2005) found that the use of online instruction as a supplement of the writing instruction was more effective than using a textbook alone. Similarly, Hertel (2003 as cited in Wang, 2005) examined that the use of e-mail exchanges for intercultural activities and found that emails helped to increase knowledge and awareness of the other cultures, as well as promoted language acquisition. Furthermore, Hegelheimer and Fisher (2006) suggested that technology can be used to help raise learner awareness of grammatical features, to increase motivation, and to promote collaborative learning such as peer-editing.

Vorobel, Voorhees, and Gokcora (2018) examined some of the Web 2.0 tools that are used to enhance L2 learning such as online dictionaries, bookmarking, and annotation websites. Vorobel, et al (2018) argued that studies have demonstrated that Web 2.0 tools support L2 learners as a way to improve their grammar knowledge and their understanding of patterns of language because learners are able to access variety of authentic linguistic texts. In the same way, Web 2.0 tools facilitate collaborative learning because students can participate in reading discussion with the teacher or with other students, providing flexibility in time, providing more opportunities for analysis, and engaging student's participation (Vorobel et al., 2018). Additionally, Vorobel, et al. (2018) conducted a study to explore the use of a social bookmarking as a tool for the development of reading in the L2 in a community college course. Results in the study demonstrated that the social bookmarking tool was beneficial for the development of reading in the L2 in a community college course because it enhanced ESL students' motivation and engagement in reading in the L2 and offered different opportunities for the students to

engage in collaborative practices, creating a community of the L2 readers as well as contributed to their development of reading.

Similarly, Featro and DiGregorio (2016) explored the use of blogging as a strategy improve the literacy skills of English as a second language (ESL) students. Featro and DiGregorio (2016) asserted that the use of blogs in the classroom as an instructional tool can engage students in discussion and support peer learning; also, blogs can be considered as constructivist learning tool because blogs are collaborative, meaningful, authentic, active, and manipulative by nature. Moreover, blogging promotes student reflection and metacognition because blogs allow students to participate in their own learning, set their own goals, and share their knowledge in order to develop their own understanding of the target learning activities (Featro & DiGregorio, 2016). After conducting a qualitative study, Featro and DiGregorio (2016) concluded that even though there are multiple challenges when planning and implementing blogging in educational settings, the use of blogging has positive effects and that can enhance classroom learning. Participants in the study expressed a positive view of blogs as instructional tools that can support classroom learning.

The different research has favored the use of technology to promote students' success in second language education. As Wang (2005) advised, teachers must be aware that technology is only a tool, and that meaningful and adequate instruction must be designed to successfully integrate these new tools in the classroom. Teachers must be reflective and mindful about the needs of their students, their interests, and challenges. In this way, teachers will be able to select adequate technology tools that successfully support the learning process in the classroom.

Chapter III: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the motivation of creating a web of online resources using an application called Symbaloo to support literacy development in second language acquisition of the newcomers. This project also intends to provide appropriate online resources for teachers to enhance and enrich their instructions to meet the needs of English learners.

Teaching in a 21st century classroom has become challenging because teachers are expected to be prepared to adapt to the new tendencies, and the students must be prepared integrally to face all the technology, social, cultural, and cognitive challenges that the world has for them. Moreover, being a teacher in the United States can be more challenging due to the wide diversity found in the classroom and the increasing numbers of immigrants that vary each year. Consequently, teachers are expected to successfully support the newcomers in the adaptation of this new system as well as cover all the academic gaps that the student may have. Teachers often struggle to face the challenges of teaching newcomers, especially the students who are limited English proficient. Gilmour, Klieve, and Li (2018) explored research related to teacher preparedness for multicultural classes, and they found that too many teachers are neither prepared nor qualified for teaching diverse students. Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002 as cited in Gilmour et al., 2018) found in their research on culturally diverse students in mainstream classes in the United States that the majority of educators teaching English learners had not any special training to support these particular students. Furthermore, Luster (2011 as cited in Gilmour et al., 2018) argued that most of the teachers teaching ELLs in middle and secondary schools in the United States are trained only for mainstream teaching; hence, it is difficult for teachers to provided adequate support to meet the cultural needs of students from diverse

backgrounds. In this context, administrators and school directors must seek teacher development programs to empower English learners' educators to be able to support these students in their process to adapt and succeed in a mainstream classroom. In the same way, teachers must reflect on the appropriate tools or strategies that are necessary to be included to promote academic achievement and to support the specials needs and challenges that a culturally diverse classroom can face.

The use of technology in ESL education is often seen as a suitable tool to promote the development of language proficiency and as a teaching aid to achieve educational goals. The use of technology in the classroom may offer access to new activities, materials, and may increase students' interest and motivation, making learning more effective. Different research has analyzed the advantages of using technology to promote students' success in second language education. For example, Wang (2005) explored different studies to analyze the advantages of technology integration in the ESL field. Al-Jarf (2004 as cited in Wang, 2005) found that the use of online instruction as a supplement of the writing instruction was more effective than using a textbook alone. Similarly, Hertel (2003 as cited in Wang, 2005) examined that the use of e-mail exchanges for intercultural activities and found that emails helped to increase knowledge and awareness of the other cultures, as well as promoted language acquisition. Likewise, Vorobel, Voorhees, and Gokcora (2018) examined some of the Web 2.0 tools that are used to enhance L2 learning such as online dictionaries, bookmarking, and annotation websites. Vorobel, et al (2018) argued that studies have demonstrated that Web 2.0 tools support L2 learners as a way to improve their grammar knowledge and their understanding of patterns of language because learners are able to access a variety of authentic linguistic texts. In the same way, Web 2.0 tools facilitate collaborative learning because students can participate in reading discussions with the

teacher or with other students, providing flexibility in time, providing more opportunities for analysis, and engaging students' participation (Vorobel et al., 2018).

During my teaching experience as an exchange teacher in the United States, I have observed how teachers have faced the challenges of teaching newcomers. These students can arrive to their classroom at any time during the school year, and they usually are not English speakers. Teachers do not have any preparation or special training to support all the cultural, emotional, and academic needs that these students have. These teachers only have the support of the ESL teacher, who helps them with some strategies to include in their classroom to support their students, and the students receive pull-out instructions by the ESL teacher some days of the week. In different talks with the teachers, they even mention that they feel panic when they have a newcomer because they do not know how to communicate with them, and sometimes it is hard to help them to adapt to the class routines and is even harder to cover all the academic gaps that the students have to succeed in a mainstream classroom.

As a way to support the teachers of my school and the literacy process of the newcomers, the final product of my project is the creation of a webmix using a visual bookmarking tool called Symbaloo in which teachers will be able to find different online resources to support language acquisition in newcomers and English language learners. The webmix has different resources that elementary teachers can use to reinforce, practice, and consolidate their English instruction through games, songs, videos, and interactive materials. I have guided my project according to the North Carolina Common Core Readings Standards, and the program Fundations® Wilson Language Basics used in the school, and one of my main focus of this project is the acquisition of vocabulary. As Calderón, Slavin, and Sánchez (2011) argued, "vocabulary is the first step toward and, indeed, the foundation of, school success for English

learners and other students" (p. 110). Through this project, teachers will be able to help students focus on their vocabulary development since vocabulary knowledge is important for the ESL students because it helps to develop phonological awareness and reading comprehension. As a result of this project, teachers will understand the importance of teaching explicit vocabulary in all subject areas before, during, and after reading, and will be able to see that the students benefit the most when the teachers provide rich and varied experiences to learn as many words possible during the day (Calderón et al., 2011).

Chapter IV: The project

This project contains a compilation of online resources using the visual bookmarking tool Symbaloo, to support literacy development in second language acquisition of newcomers and English learners. By using the bookmarking tool Symbaloo, teachers will be able to find different online resources to support the language acquisition of their students. The webmix has different resources that elementary teachers can use to reinforce, practice, and consolidate their English instruction through videos, games, songs, and interactive materials. Therefore, teachers will be able to help students focus on their vocabulary development, since vocabulary knowledge is important for ESL students in that it helps them to develop phonological awareness and reading comprehension. As Calderón et al. (2011) argued, "vocabulary is the first step toward and, indeed, the foundation of, school success for English learners and other students" (p. 110). Teachers will be able to use this tool to improve their instruction, but also, this webmix can be used by the students themselves, to work independently to acquire a second language. My webmix is called ESL Resources SES and can be found by clicking on the following URL: http://www.symbaloo.com/shared/AAAABVt3WFgAA41_0SsMyw==.

The webmix has different tiles with links to useful classroom resources like videos, games, or books. The tiles are organized into different webmixes (categories) that can be differentiated by color. Each tile has a description of the resources that can be found in the category. The tiles have pictures or symbols to helps educators and students easily find the desired resource.

The first category of resources that teachers and students will find is colored green and is related to basic vocabulary (Figure 1). Learning the basic language vocabulary is extremely

important for newcomers, not only to communicate their needs to the teachers, but also to participate in daily social activities. As Peregoy and Boyle (2013) argued, one of the basic needs to consider while integrating new students in the classroom is the creation of a safe and secure environment. Learning vocabulary related to the school and classroom routines will help students to feel safe while they learn the classroom dynamics and gradually integrate into the social activities. In this category, students will find vocabulary related to greetings, feelings, health, classroom vocabulary (object, places, subjects), body parts, weather, colors, numbers, shapes, and animals. Each tile contains around 3 or 4 videos to listen to and to use to practice vocabulary, and at least two games to apply what the student has learned.

Figure 1: Basic vocabulary resources

The second category has the blue color and focuses on English literacy development (Figure 2). Peregoy and Boyle (2013) emphasized the importance of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in literacy development, and they suggested the accomplishment of these goals within a rich literacy environment with different text such as poems, songs, and predictable stories. In this category teachers will be able to find different kinds of resources to reinforce, practice, and consolidate their English instruction. Topics in this category were selected according to the priority Reporting Standards of North Carolina Common Core Readings Standards from K to 2, and the program Fundations® Wilson Language Basics used in my current school. Each tile contains 3-4 videos to reinforce the topic. The topics in this category are:

- Alphabet and letter sounds,
- Rhyming words
- Short vowels
- Long vowels
- Digraphs
- Syllables
- R-controlled vowels
- Vowel diphthongs
- Consonants blends
- Prefix and suffix
- Silent e
- Dolch sight words K-2.

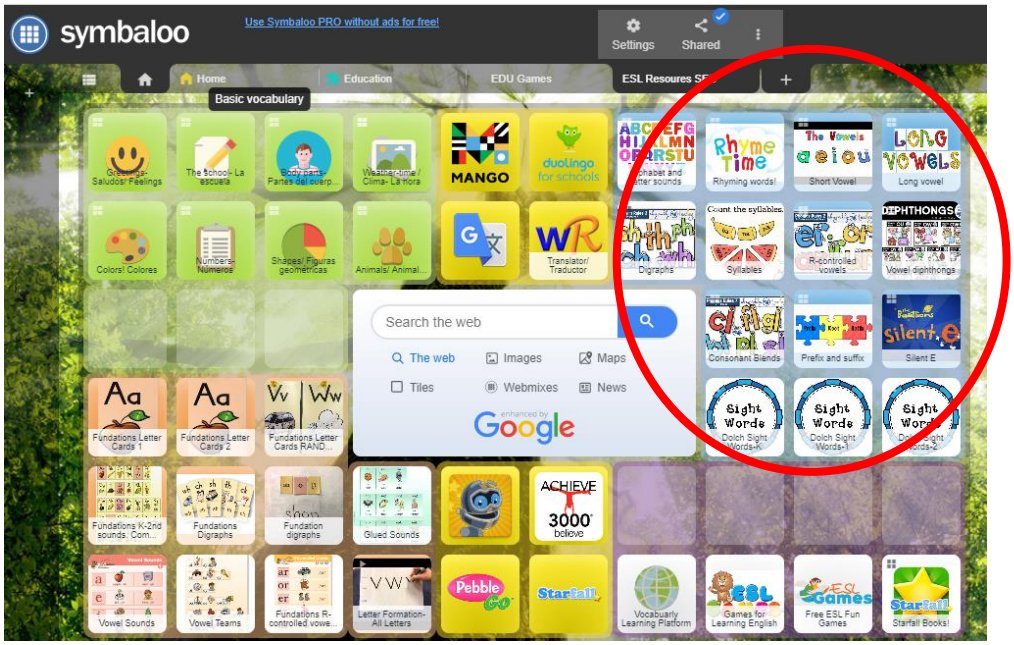

Figure 2: Phonological awareness

The third category is orange colored (Figure 3). In this category, teachers will find different kinds of resources related to the language program Wilson Fundations® used in my current school. Wilson Fundations provides students with a systematic program in the foundational skills for reading and spelling, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics-word study, high-frequency word study, fluency, vocabulary, handwriting, and spelling. When teachers have a newcomer in third, fourth or fifth grade, the major concern is that this student does not have the opportunity to utilize this foundation program because it is only offered from K-2 grades. By using my Symbaloo webmix, teachers will be able to provide specific instruction to support newcomers' English learning process, especially in reading and spelling, and personalize it according to students' needs.

Figure 3: Fundation resources

The fourth category, colored purple (Figure 4), provides some extra resources for teachers to facilitate and enrich their instruction through vocabulary games, books, and activities, especially designed for English Learners. Calderón et al., (2011) argued that vocabulary instruction contributes to overall effective instruction by developing students' phonological awareness and reading comprehension. In the same way, students benefit the most when teachers provide rich and varied language experiences. While using these resources, students will be able to listen, repeat, practice, play, and learn vocabulary related to any topic, acquiring a great background knowledge that will help them to have a better understanding of what is being taught in the classroom.

Figure 4: Games and extra resources for teachers

Finally, teachers and students can find the fifth category in yellow (Figure 5), which provides some of the common programs and applications used in the school. In the upper section, they will have access to different programs to learn and practice English. Students will be able to use these programs at the school or at home, and also, they will find translator programs that will be useful during the classroom routine. In the lower section, users can have access to common learning programs used in the school and English and Spanish resources such as Reading A-Z, Achieve 3000, Pebble Go, and Start Fall. Students will be able to use these programs, following the teacher's instructions, as a tool for research or for independent work.

Figure 5: Aditional resources

Chapter V: Conclusion

Having the chance to become an exchange teacher in a new country has been one of the most enriching and life-changing opportunities that I have had, not only because I have grown as a professional, but also because living in a new country has changed my world completely and has made me grow as a person. People do not realize all the challenges that a person moving to a new country will face, not only culturally, but also psychologically, socially, and cognitively. After living in this country for almost five years, sometimes I still struggle with the language barrier and cultural differences even though before my arrival I already had a basic level of English. This experience made me think about all the different challenges that immigrant children face when they leave their countries and start a new life in a completely different world.

During my job as a dual language teacher at Stoneville Elementary School in North Carolina, I have noticed that immigrant students arrive in mainstream classrooms where they are expected to effectively function in an education system that probably is completely different from the one they are used to. Teachers are expected to successfully support the newcomer in adapting to this new system, as well as cover all the academic gaps that the student may have. Teachers in my community have expressed that they feel "panic" when they receive a newcomer in their classroom. First because of the language barrier, and second because of the big challenge that they have in supporting these students with all the social, emotional, cultural, and academic needs that they have. Teachers in my community usually ask the dual language teachers for help in supporting these students by translating words, explaining some commands during the daily routine, or just sending or asking questions to their parents.

Based on my experience as a TESOL student and on my experiences as a teacher, I feel the responsibility to support my coworkers by designing a tool that helps empower their instruction and gives them more instruments so that they can better support newcomers in their adaptation to their new environment. For that reason, I developed a webmix of online resources using a visual bookmarking tool called Symbaloo through which teachers will easily find the best online resources that the students can use to develop their language and communication skills as soon as they are integrated into a mainstream classroom.

Learning the basic language vocabulary is extremely important for the newcomers, not only to communicate their needs with the teachers, but also to participate in the daily social activities. The kind of language used in daily activities is defined as BICS, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, and according to Echevarria and Graves (2015) "involves such abilities as retelling events, describing experiences, narrating activities, offering personal opinions, all within the general give-and-take of conversation with family and friends" (p. 11). The learning of basic interpersonal communicative skills is easier for children than for adults and can take from six months to three years to develop (Echevarria & Graves, 2015). In this perspective, newcomers will need support in developing these basic interpersonal communicative skills to start their interaction within the social context, and if they have a website of resources, such as Symbaloo, they can acquire the basic vocabulary in the second language to be able to participate in social and daily routine activities. This webmix has different resources, that not only will help students to learn and practice the basic English vocabulary (colors, numbers, alphabet sounds), but also will have resources to support what is being taught in class.

Additionally, I believe that the use of applications like Symbaloo will help the teachers to have an innumerable web of resources to support the newcomers; furthermore, the students will

be more interested and engaged in using technology while they develop their language skills. Moreover, Symbaloo is a tool that many teachers are already using at Stoneville Elementary, so the ESL Symbaloo can be easily added to the website of resources used by the teachers. In the same way, while teachers are using new interactive tools like Symbaloo to support their students in their second language acquisition, they also are preparing them for their technological challenges and changes of the 21st century.

Creating this project has been a wonderful opportunity to support the ESL students in my community and to improve their language skills, as well as support the teachers in providing the resources to include in their lessons. The creation of this project has been special, not only because I have grown as a professional, as a teacher, and as an English learner, but also because this is my last year working for this wonderful community, and I felt proud to leave a part of me with them with this project.

I hope that this project serves as an effective tool for teachers and that my webmix will help them to enrich their lessons and support the language acquisition process of newcomers and English learners. I believe that further work should be undertaken to support the newcomers and their families in their adaptation process to the mainstream classroom, not only academically, but also, socially, and emotionally.

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